As well as each of the previous volumes, Reveille has come to signify something that can be found in abundance time and again among our Section members and leadership – dependability.

Member Spotlight: Ernie Lee

By Charles R. Raphun

In many ways, the role of North Carolina’s prosecutors reflects the intersection of implementing legal principles and navigating the practical realities of protecting the public. One public servant who exemplifies this is Ernest R. (“Ernie”) Lee – District Attorney for the Fourth Prosecutorial District – a four-county district covering Duplin, Jones, Onslow and Sampson Counties. Ernie’s dedication to supporting the rule of law and promoting the rights of crime victims and the public is remarkable. His military career as an Army Reserve Judge Advocate officer mirrors his civilian legal career and his skill at understanding the unique needs and concerns of the military is a model for North Carolina attorneys striving to support service personnel, veterans and their families.

Ernie is a 1982 graduate of Atlantic Christian College (now Barton College) in Wilson, N.C., where he majored in political science and, during the course of his undergraduate program so that planning could immediately begin for the Section’s first spring CLE, a collaboration with the Elder Law Section. If you represent or are interested in representing veterans before the Department of Veterans Affairs, you definitely will not want to miss the 6.0 hours of beginner and advanced topics training set for May 18, 2018 at Campbell Law School. The training will satisfy VA accreditation requirements as long as attendees are approved for accreditation by the VA in advance. Thanks also to our upcoming presenters, including Mary Markovich and our own Tim Wipperman.

Third, as a result of recent approval from the NC Bar Foundation for convenient malpractice coverage, future pro bono efforts across the state aimed at benefitting active duty servicemembers and veterans will be able to reliably recruit from his vast network of experienced attorneys.

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a larger pool of volunteer attorneys and increase the value of participation for all involved. The move memorializes a partnership between MVLS, the NC Pro Bono Resource Center, and the UNC School of Law Veterans Legal Assistance Project to host servicemember and veteran legal clinics, the next being April 13, 2018 at the Durham VA Medical Center. All Section members are heavily encouraged to inquire about this and future events (or assist with planning future events) and to volunteer to provide on-site advice and counsel. These clinics are being developed based on data specific to the needs of the area and population of servicemembers or veterans that they serve. Many of our members, including Vice-Chair Brentley Tanner, of Sullivan & Tanner, have answered the call and stepped up to volunteer when these specific clinics began in 2017.

Finally, speaking of clinics, our Legislative Chair Robert Davis, of the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, remains optimistic we may see another kind of expansion of legal services for homeless and at-risk veterans in North Carolina and across the nation. For some years, Robert has helped supervise regular monthly legal clinics at VA medical centers in Charlotte and Salisbury. Legislation at the national level like Senate Bill 1072 could provide funding for such efforts and thanks to Robert's updates, MVLS was one of 10,000 signatories amassed in less than a week's time urging quick passage by Congress.

2018 is shaping up to be another banner year for the MVLS and I remain honored to be playing a leadership role among some of our profession's most inspiring leaders.